AKIRA 9™

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

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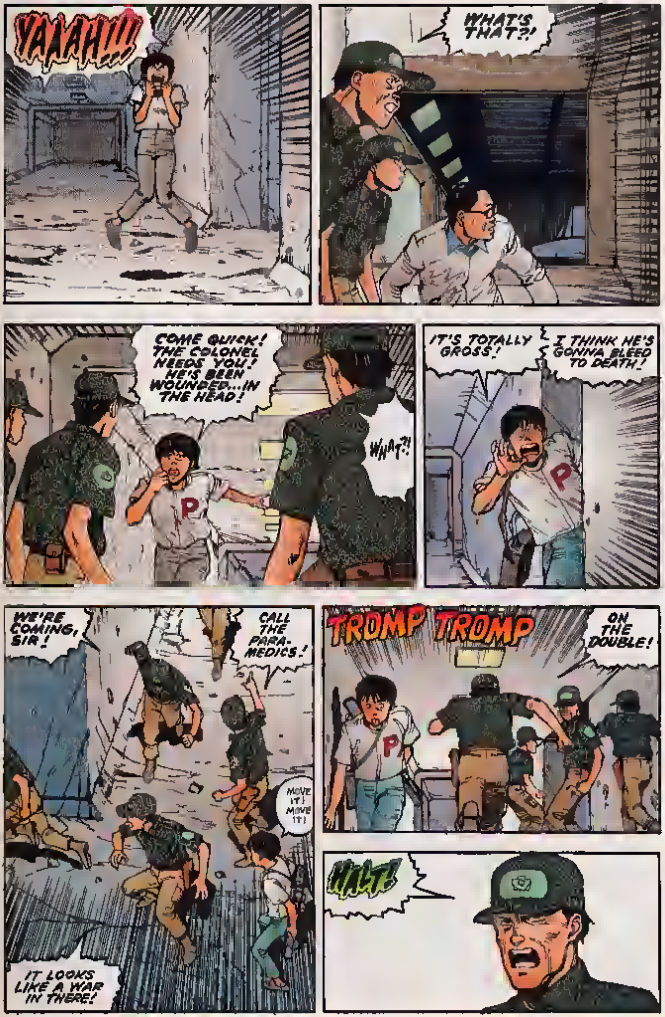
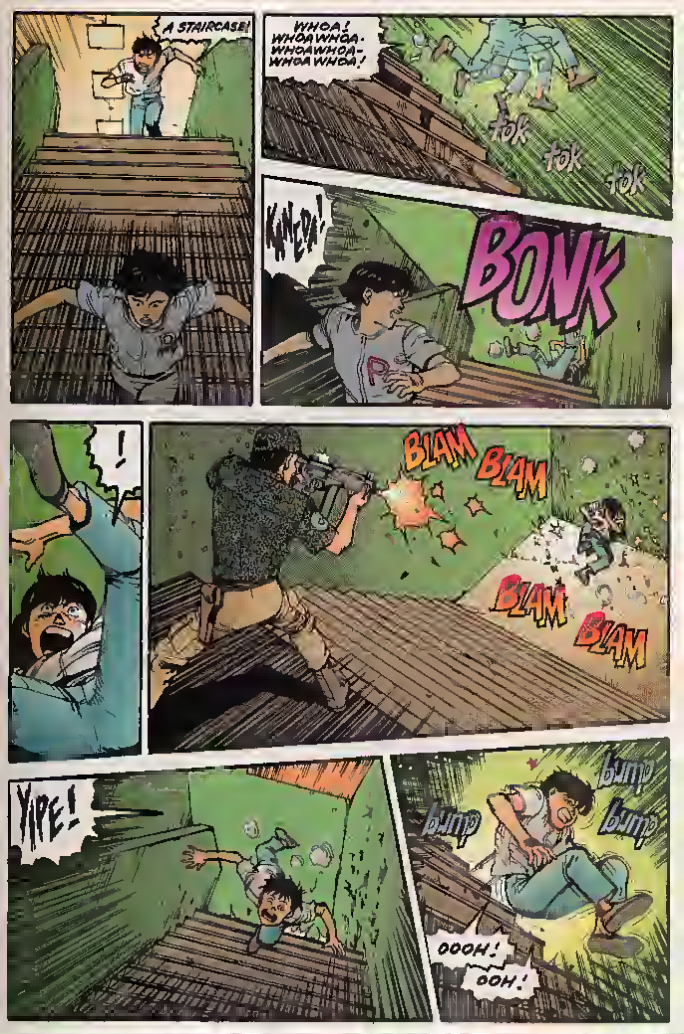

YAAAHH!!!
WHAT'S THAT?!
COME QUICK! THE COLONEL NEEDS YOU! HE'S BEEN WOUNDED...IN THE HEAD!
WHAA?!
IT'S TOTALLY GROSS!
I THINK HE'S GONNA BLEED TO DEATH!
WE'RE COMING, SIR!
CALL THE PARA-MEDICS!
MOVE IT! MOVE IT!
IT LOOKS LIKE A WAR IN THERE!
TROMP TROMP
ON THE DOUBLE!
HALT!

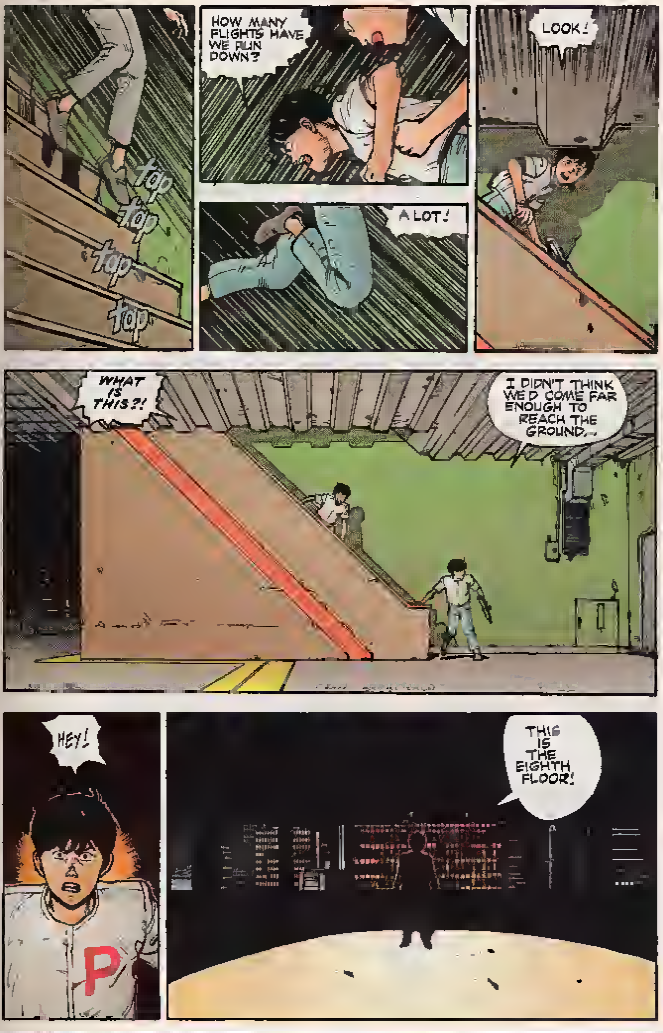
THESE TWO ARE WEARING PRISONERS' UNIFORMS...
...SO JUST WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?
WE'RE
WE'RE
...
MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, ASSHOLE!
ZZAAP
ZZZAAP
ZING
AAUGH!!
THONK

TAK-TAK-TAK-TAK
BIP
PUFF
PUFF
HOW WE DOIN'?
15
SO FAR, SO GOOD.
VOOSH

HEY! WHAT AM I RUNNING FOR?
SKREEECH
AUGH!
ZAP
OWWWWWW!
WHAT A TIME FOR THE BATTERIES TO DIE!
CLUNK
AT LEAST I WON'T HAVE TO LUG THAT THING AROUND ANYMORE!
OH, CRAP!

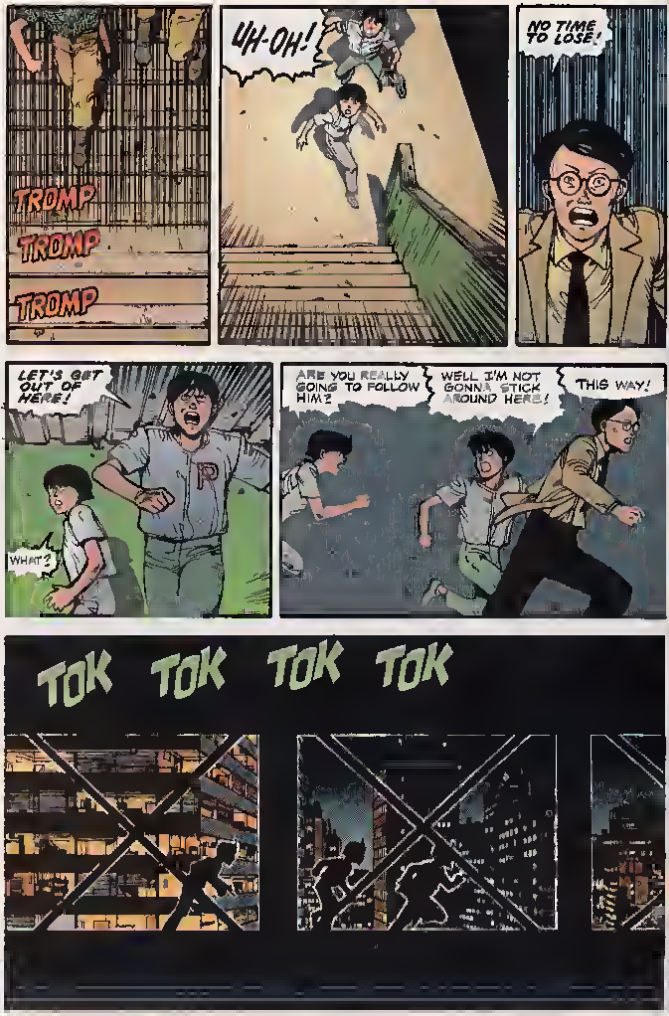

A STAIRCASE!
WHOA! WHOAWHOA- WHOAWHOA- WHOAWHOA!
tok tok tok
KAMEKA!
BONK
!
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
YIPE!
bump bump bump
OOOH! OOH!

OWWW!
HURRY!
!
TEK
CREAK
CREAK
SWOOP
WAH...!
BOP
GOTCHA!
BACK OFF OR YOU'RE HISTORY!
BLAM
YIPE!


tap
tap
tap
tap
HOW MANY FLIGHTS HAVE WE RUN DOWN?
A LOT!
LOOK!
WHAT IS THIS?!
I DIDN'T THINK WE'D COME FAR ENOUGH TO REACH THE GROUND...
HEY!
P
THIS IS THE EIGHTH FLOOR!

WHO'S THERE?!
DON'T SHOOT! HOLD YOUR FIRE! WE'RE ON THE SAME SIDE!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THE SAME SIDE?
I WANT TO HELP YOU!
WE ARE, REALLY.
I WOULDN'T LIE.

.....
A FRIEND OF MINE TOLD ME ABOUT IT. HE USED TO HELP YOU.
YOU'RE PART OF THE RESISTANCE, AREN'T YOU?
REMEMBER WHEN TAKASHI--NUMBER 26--MADE IT OUT OF HERE? THAT WAS MY FRIEND'S DOING.
I DON'T KNOW A THING ABOUT IT
WHERE'S THIS FRIEND OF YOURS NOW?
GONE... CAPTURED.
HE...AND ALL HIS FILES... VANISHED LIKE THEY NEVER EVEN EXISTED.
HE WAS MY BEST FRIEND.


TROMP
TROMP
TROMP
UH-OH!
NO TIME TO LOSE!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
WHAT?
ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO FOLLOW HIM?
WELL I'M NOT GONNA STICK AROUND HERE!
THIS WAY!
TOK TOK TOK TOK

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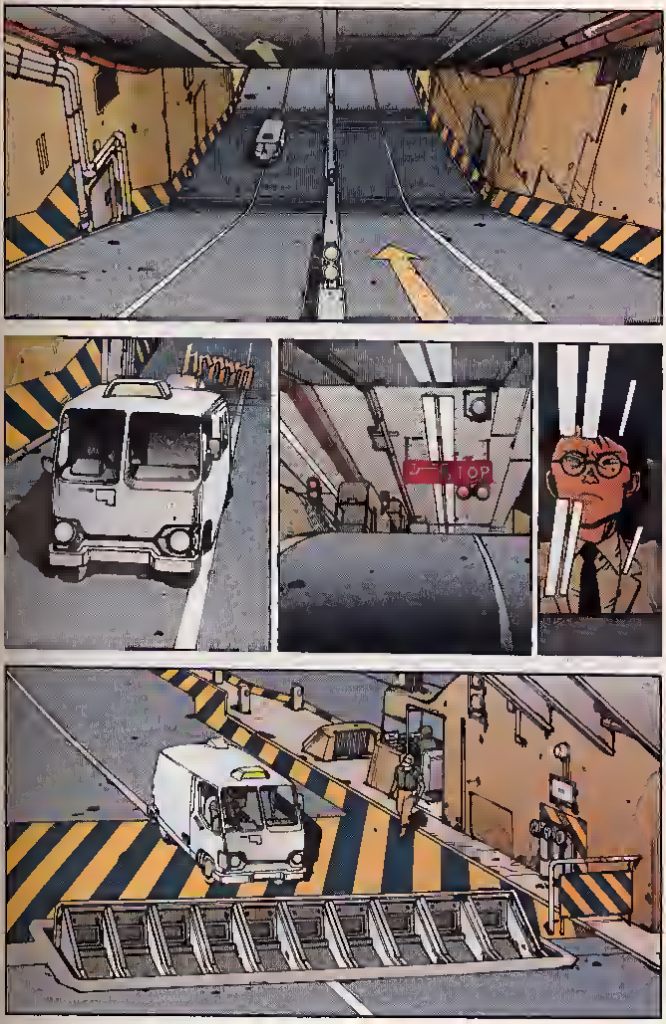
..SHORTED OUT THE WHOLE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM.
THE AIR-CONDITIONER AND EVERYTHING ?
THE WHOLE BALL OF WAX
WHERE'S THE EMERGENCY BACKUP SWITCH ?
IT'S ALREADY WORKING.
IT COMES ON AUTOMATICALLY
WE MUST ..

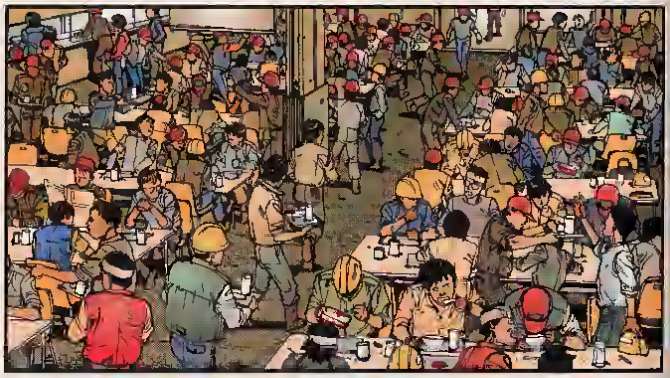
...CONTROL THE FUTURE.
THERE IS NOT JUST ONE PATH!


hmmm
STOP

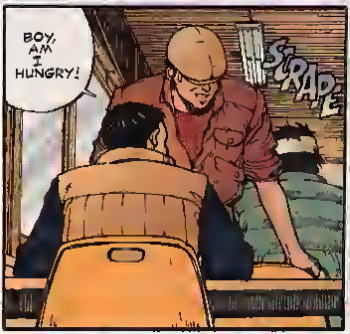
OPEN THE BACK SO I CAN TAKE A LOOK
KLAK
VRONK
OKAY

FOR NOW THE FUTURE IS OUT OF OUR HANDS...
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IS UP TO THE TWO OF THEM.

KLANK
KLAK
KLON
KLON
KLON
KLUNK

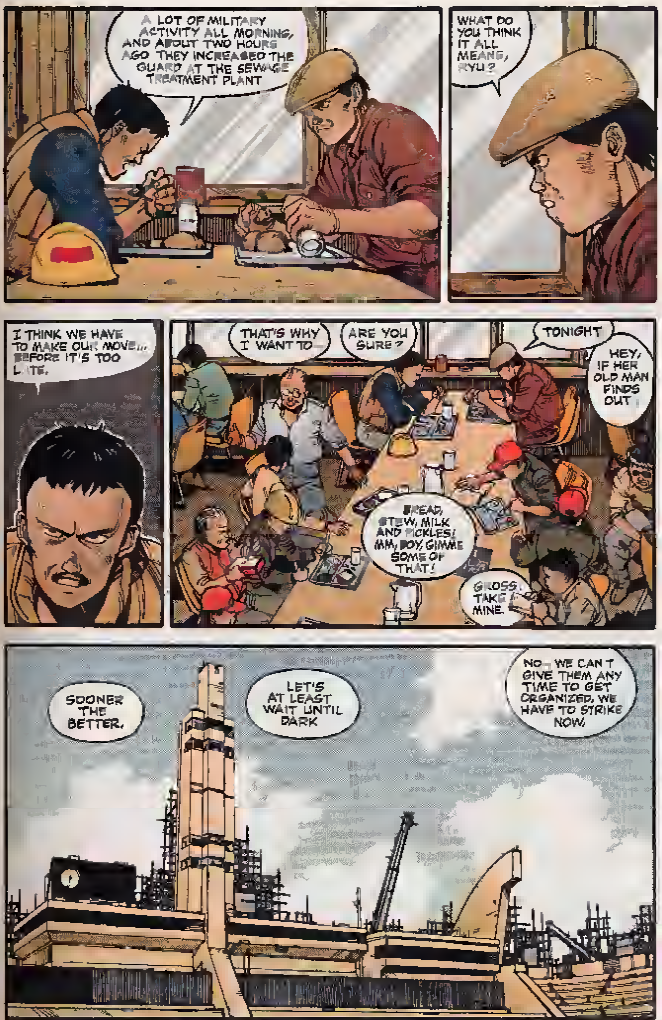


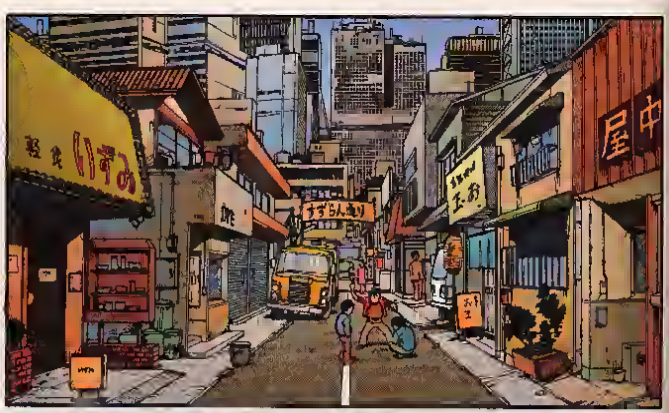
PLOK

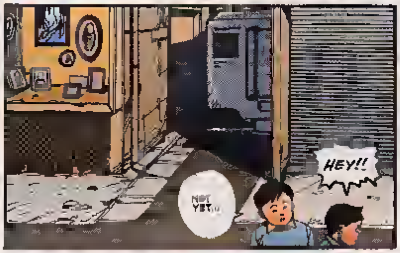

BOY, AM I HUNGRY!
SCRAPE

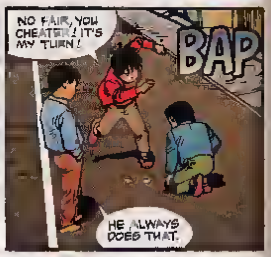
SOME-THING'S UP.

ARE YOU SURE?


A LOT OF MILITARY ACTIVITY ALL MORNING, AND ABOUT TWO HOURS AGO THEY INCREASED THE GUARD AT THE SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT
WHAT DO YOU THINK IT ALL MEANS, RYU?
I THINK WE HAVE TO MAKE OUR MOVE... BEFORE IT'S TOO L TE.
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO
ARE YOU SURE?
TONIGHT
HEY, IF HER OLD MAN FINDS OUT!
BREAD, STEW, MILK AND PICKLES! MM, BOY, GIMME SOME OF THAT!
GROSS. TAKE MINE.
SOONER THE BETTER.
LET'S AT LEAST WAIT UNTIL DARK
NO— WE CAN'T GIVE THEM ANY TIME TO GET ORGANIZED, WE HAVE TO STRIKE NOW.




HEY!!
NOT YET!!


NO FAIR, YOU CHEATER! IT'S MY TURN!
BAP
HE ALWAYS DOES THAT.

お玉
HEY! I WANNA PLAY, TOO!

SLURP
SLURP
CRUNCH
CRUNCH

AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

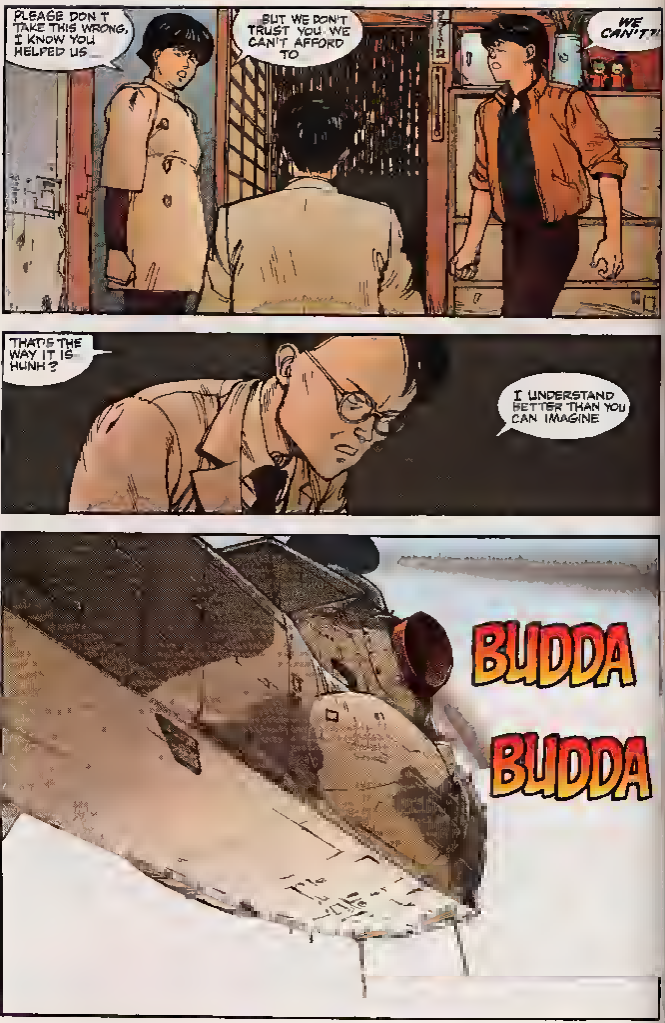
CHAPTER 9

STALKERS

MUNCH MUNCH
SLOBBER SLOBBER SLOBBER
THIS STUFF ISN'T HALF BAD
UH
YOU WANT ANY? THERE'S STILL SOME SYNTHETIC FISH LEFT
WHAT, ? OH, NO THANKS
slurp slurp
HASN'T KAY BEEN GONE AN AWFULLY LONG TIME...?

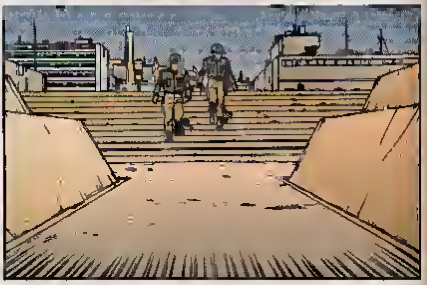
I DON'T UNDERSTAND, KAY. WHY DO YOU INSIST ON STAYING WITH THE TWO OF THEM?
THE YOUNGER ONE-- KANEDA-- IS OKAY.
AS FOR THE GUY WITH THE GLASSES AUNTY CHIYOKO...
WELL...
THE PLAN TO FREE NUMBER 26 WAS RYUSAKU'S OPERATION... AND THIS MAN CLAIMS HE WAS IN ON THAT.
EXACTLY! SO, IF RYU COULD MEET HIM, WE'D FIND OUT FOR SURE IF HE'S WHO HE SAYS HE IS.
IT'LL BE TROUBLE YOU DON'T NEED IF I LEAVE HIM BEHIND AND HE TURNS OUT TO BE A PHONY...
AND IF HE IS...
...I WANT TO BE THE ONE WHO TAKES CARE OF IT.
WELL, IN THAT CASE...

HERE SHE COMES!
WHAT A PIG! I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE STILL EATING!
WE HAVE TO GO!
MMF!
WHERE?
TO THE OLD CITY. THE CONSTRUCTION SITE FOR THE NEXT OLYMPICS.
IS THAT WHERE TETSUO IS?!
SCRAPE
PLEASE TAKE ME WITH YOU!
THEY'LL KILL ME IF I GO BACK NOW!
BESIDES, I... I WANT TO HELP YOU. I KNOW IT'S WHAT MY FRIEND WOULD HAVE WANTED!
OKAY, YOU CAN COME, BUT...


PLEASE DON'T TAKE THIS WRONG, I KNOW YOU HELPED US
BUT WE DON'T TRUST YOU. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO
WE CAN'T?!
THAT'S THE WAY IT IS. HUNH?
I UNDERSTAND BETTER THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE
BUDDA
BUDDA

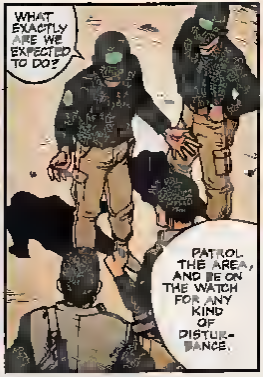
BUDDABUDDABUDDABUDDABUDDABUD

HUNH ?



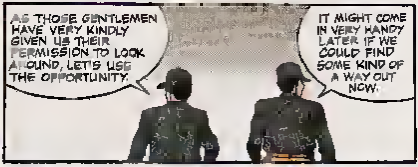
WHO GOES THERE ?
WE RE PART OF THE NEW SUPPORT STAFF
WE JUST GOT REASSIGNED HERE

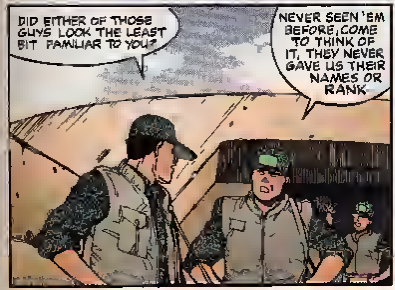
CENTRAL COMMAND DIDN'T FILL US IN ON THE SITUATION.
JOIN THE CLUB.


WHAT EXACTLY ARE WE EXPECTED TO DO?
PATROL THE AREA, AND BE ON THE WATCH FOR ANY KIND OF DISTURBANCE.

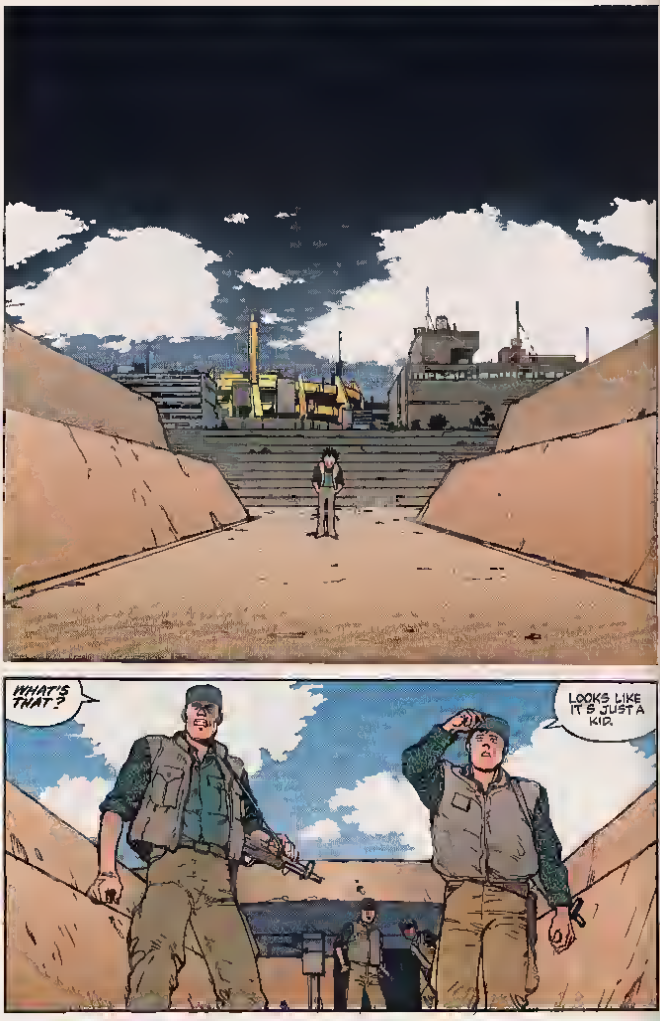
ALL I KNOW IS, WE'RE CURRENTLY AT CODE YELLOW.
THERE'S BEEN TALK OF SOME KIND OF REVOLT.

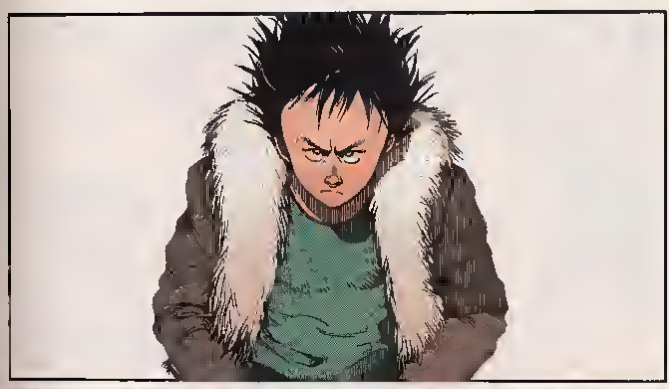
WHAT ARE WE STANDING AROUND HERE FOR, RYU?
A LITTLE PATIENCE, MY FRIEND.

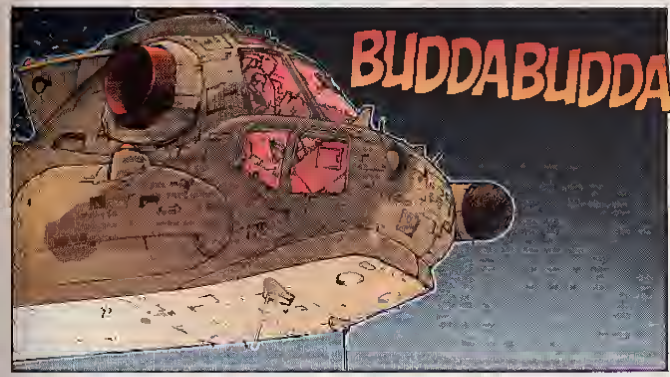

AS THOSE GENTLEMEN HAVE VERY KINDLY GIVEN US THEIR PERMISSION TO LOOK AROUND, LET'S USE THE OPPORTUNITY.
IT MIGHT COME IN VERY HANDY LATER IF WE COULD FIND SOME KIND OF A WAY OUT NOW.

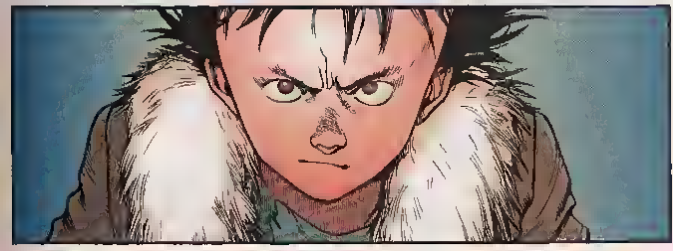

DID EITHER OF THOSE GUYS LOOK THE LEAST BIT FAMILIAR TO YOU?
NEVER SEEN 'EM BEFORE, COME TO THINK OF IT, THEY NEVER GAVE US THEIR NAMES OR RANK

HMM.
?


WHAT'S THAT?
LOOKS LIKE IT'S JUST A KID.




BUDDABUDDA



!
GUNFIRE--!
LET'S TAKE A LOOK!
AAAGH!
pft
pft
UH... UH...

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

The year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo** plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city"—where thirty-eight years before the first of the bombs fell.

Kaneda and his friends, teenage delinquents, make an unauthorized motorcycle run into the old city to check out the old site. They encounter a terrified child, known only as **Number 26**, possessing extraordinary telekinetic abilities. During the encounter the paranormal boy gravely injures **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends. Then he vanishes.

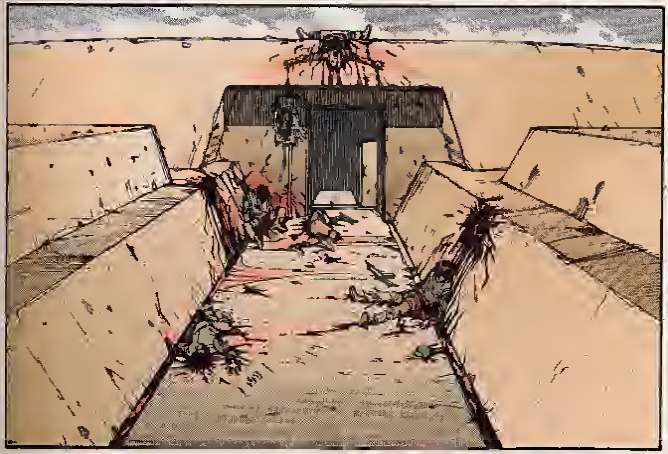
The next night, at **Harukiya**, a tough local dive, **Kaneda** attempts, unsuccessfully, to pick up a newcomer **Kay**. In fact, she and her companion **Ryu** are part of an underground resistance group dedicated to learning what is happening in the old city and putting a stop to it.

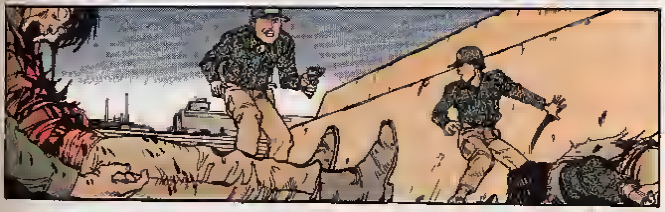
Trouble ensues, and both delinquents and resistance fighters again encounter **Number 26**. Then the ominous **Colonel**, in charge of the covert operation, appears with a secret weapon—**Number 27**, a crippled paranormal child named **Masaru**. **Masaru** astonishes the resistance fighters by addressing **Number 26** as **Takashi**. **Kay** and **Ryu** had previously assumed that **Number 26** was the Colonel's ultimate weapon—the as-yet unseen paranormal giant code named **Akira**. **Kaneda** is separated from the resistance fighters, but he manages to intercept and hide a pill meant for **Takashi**, who is recaptured by the Colonel's men.

Tetsuo—who, following his accident, was taken to a hospital by soldiers serving the **Colonel**—is taken from school by the **Colonel** after his recovery. Under the treatments of the Colonel's chief medical officer, **Tetsuo** exhibits powerful telekinetic abilities, and undergoes great pain. Finally, **Tetsuo** breaks out of the Colonel's installation, using his burgeoning powers to slaughter all who oppose him.

Meanwhile, **Kaneda**, trying to learn what is happening to **Tetsuo**, re-encounters the members of the resistance and is brought back to their

Kaneda **Tetsuo** **Kay** **Ryu**





HEY!

LOOK!

JESUS!

CHUNG CHUNG
CHUNG
KLAK
HURRY! WE HAVEN'T ANY TIME TO LOSE!

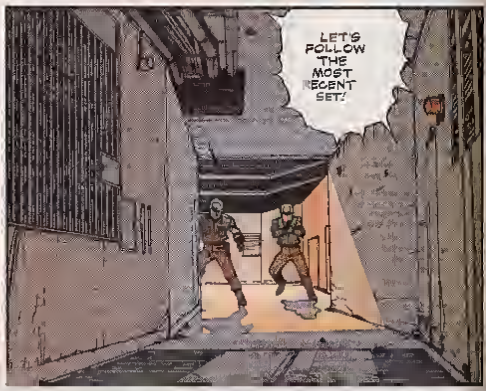
SQUEE SQUEE
SAME OLD, SAME OLD, THIS PLACE STINKS!
WHY DO WE ALWAYS HAVE TO TAKE THE SEWER?
OH, SHUT UP!
ARE YOU SENTIMENTALLY ATTACHED TO THIS PLACE, OR WHAT?
WE CAME THIS WAY BECAUSE IT'S THE ONLY WAY I KNOW.
NOW KNOCK IT OFF!

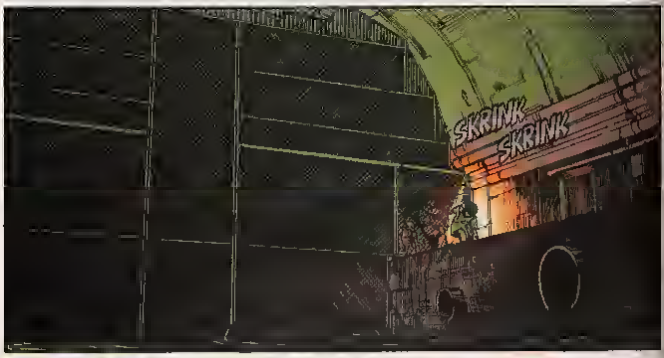
TAK
♫I'M HE-E-E-E-E!♫

BE CAREFUL.
I DON'T KNOW OF ANY KIND OF WEAPON THAT COULD DO WHAT WAS DONE TO THOSE GUYS, RYU.
ME NEITHER.
WHAT KIND OF MONSTER DO YOU SUPPOSE...
HUH?

WHICH WAY DO WE GO?

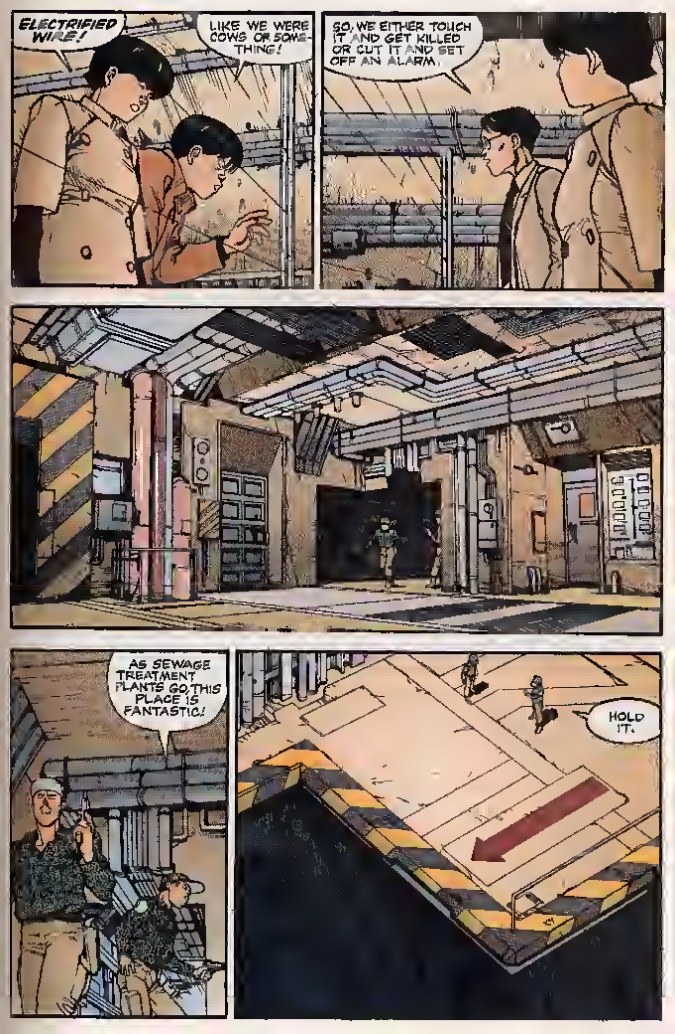
LOOK. FOOTPRINTS IN THE DUST.


LET'S FOLLOW THE MOST RECENT SET.


SKRINK
SKRINK

OW! OW! OW!
IT'S A LOT HARDER TO GET IN THAN IT WAS THE LAST TIME.
THAT'S BECAUSE SOME IDIOT-- NOT TO MENTION ANY NAMES-- STIRRED UP A LOT OF TROUBLE HERE A FEW NIGHTS AGO.
OH YEAH. WE BETTER WATCH OUT FOR THOSE FLYING BUCKET THINGS.
REMEMBER...? VVVVMMM!
WE'RE ALMOST THERE.

WHAT'S WRONG?
WATCH YOURSELVES.
I'M NOT SURE, SOMETHING ABOUT THIS DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT.
!
WHAT IS IT?
IT LOOKS LIKE..
SZZZZ
ZZZZZZZZZ


ELECTRIFIED WIRE!
LIKE WE WERE COWS OR SOMETHING!
SO, WE EITHER TOUCH IT AND GET KILLED OR CUT IT AND SET OFF AN ALARM.
AS SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANTS GO, THIS PLACE IS FANTASTIC!
HOLD IT.

?
DIDN'T YOU HEAR IT?
IT CAME FROM DOWN THERE!
TAK
WHONG
ONNNG

headquarters. Questioned by **Ryu**, he denies all knowledge of the stolen drug. When soldiers enter the resistance hideout in force, **Kaneda** and **Kay** manage together to escape to **Harukiya** where the bartender agrees to shelter them. A spy from the Colonel's organization learns of their hideout, but he is caught and left for dead by a resistance fighter.

Kiyoko, another of the psychic children under the Colonel's control, announces that **Akira**—who is asleep and expected to remain so for some time—is going to awaken in the near future.

At **Harukiya**, **Yamagata** and Kaneda's other friends tell of Tetsuo's new powers and of his bloodthirstiness. **Kaneda** and **Yamagata** lead the local street gangs on an all-out attack to stop **Tetsuo**. Then the **Colonel**, alerted by his informant, arrives at **Harukiya**, and forces the bartender to tell him where the fugitives have gone.

Yamagata and his team corner **Tetsuo** in a warehouse. Most of the gang dies, and **Kaneda** reaches the scene in time to see **Tetsuo** brutally kill **Yamagata**. Enraged, **Kaneda** shoots **Tetsuo**, who survives.

As the **Colonel** arrives, **Tetsuo** grabs and swallows the drug **Kaneda** had hidden, apparently dying of an overdose. A few minutes later, the terrible delinquent recovers, more powerful than ever, and the elated **Colonel** rechristens him **Number 41**.

Back at the Colonel's installation, Tetsuo's body shrugs off the effects of his wounds, and his mind continues its descent into madness and evil. Eavesdropping on the **Colonel** and his doctor, he is intrigued to learn that he is not unique, and that other paranormals possess talents he lacks.

Ryu, working undercover at a construction site next to the Colonel's base, meets with **Nezu**, who publicly leads the governmental opposition party, but secretly is a resistance leader as well, and they share new evidence on the scale of the **Akira** project. **Nezu**, in turn, consults **Lady Miyako**, the head of a powerful religious cult of which **Nezu** is a leader. **Lady Miyako**, who bears the **Number 19** on her hand marking her as one of the Colonel's series, and she warns of impending catastrophes which may be linked to **Akira**.

Kiyoko, **Takashi** and **Masaru** fear Tetsuo's power and

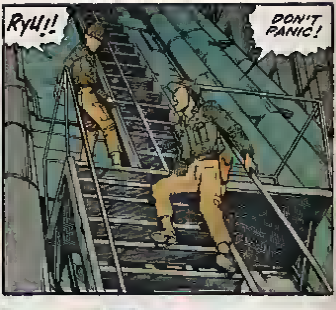
Takashi **The Colonel** **Masaru** **Yamagata**

.....
THE BODIES CAN WAIT UNTIL LATER! COME WITH ME!
HURRY!

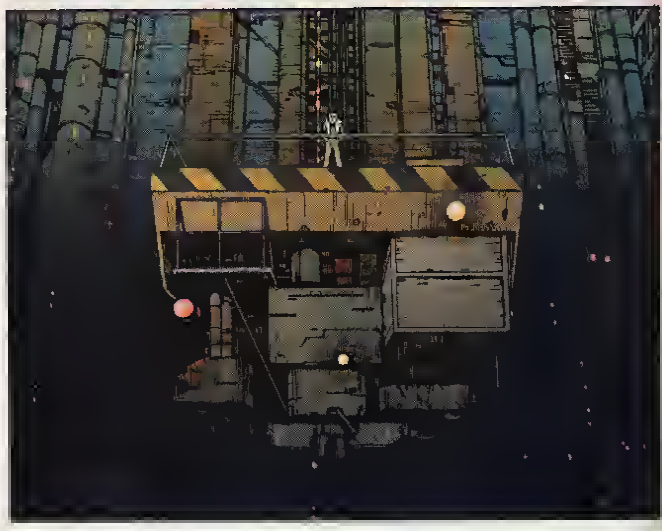
COLONEL! THE ELEVATOR'S ON ITS WAY DOWN!
DOCTOR, GET OVER HERE!
CHECK ON THE COOLING SYSTEM FOR AKIRA'S CHAMBER AT ONCE!
CHECK
HAVE THEM POST A GARRISON AT THE UNDERPASS!
YESSIR!
AND SEE THAT THE FLYING SQUADRON IS STANDING BY!
MOVE, YOU IDIOT!

SSSS
ZSSSH
JUST A LITTLE MORE... HOLD REAL STILL...
AWU
AWOOOOOOOOO
DAMN!
THE ALARM!
AWOOOOOOOOO
RYU

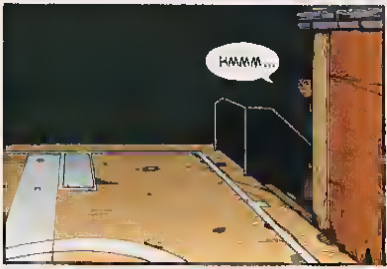
AWOOOOOOOOO


RY4!!
DON'T PANIC!

THEY'RE NOT ONTO US YET. WHOEVER FOUND ALL THOSE BODIES UPSTAIRS MUST HAVE SET IT OFF



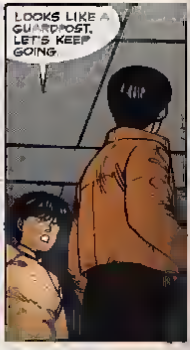
WELL?
SO FAR AS WE CAN TELL, SIR, NOTHING'S WRONG WITH THE SYSTEM. AKIRA IS FINE.
IT COULDN'T HURT TO GO DOWNSTAIRS AND CHECK IN PERSON.
HOW SOON TILL THE ELEVATOR REACHES BOTTOM?
SIR!
IT JUST PASSED LEVEL #F35, WHICH GIVES HIM AN ETA OF FIFTEEN MINUTES FROM NOW.
SWOOF
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE GARRISON? ARE THEY IN PLACE YET?


HMMM...

HOW'S IT LOOK?

31
30

TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
'SOKAY! IT'S DESERTED.
THEY MUST HAVE HAD TO REPORT SOMEWHERE WHEN THEY HEARD THE SIREN


LOOKS LIKE A GUARDPOST. LET'S KEEP GOING.

LIEUTENANT, DO YOU READ ME? COME IN PLEASE!

HUNH?
YOU AND YOUR MEN ARE TO FOLLOW THE LIFT INTO THE LOWER LEVELS. THERE IS ONE PASSENGER ABOARD.

AT ALL COSTS, YOU MUST STOP THAT BOY FROM REACHING THE LOWEST CHAMBER.

I REPEAT, DO NOT LET THE BOY GET THROUGH!
WHAT BOY?!

GONG
ONNNG
!
dong
AAUGH!!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

VVVVNNN
YAAH!
VVVVNNN
VVVVNNN
YOU BASTARDS!

discuss plans to hinder him. Then **Kay**—who, like **Kaneda**—has been brought to the installation under guard, escapes, displaying a variety of psychic powers, including telekinesis and teleportation. She attacks **Tetsuo**, almost killing him, and helps **Kaneda** to shake off his guards, acting like a sleepwalker the whole time. As guards close in on the escapees, **Tetsuo** quizzes the doctor about **Akira** and learns that his chief rival is trapped in cryogenic sleep. During the course of the conversation, the doctor is stunned to learn that **Tetsuo** can now read minds.

Kay, still somnolent most of the time, takes **Kaneda** into the armory where they help themselves to the one weapon that may work against **Tetsuo**—a laser. Meanwhile, the **Colonel** had deduced the source of Kay's new powers—she is being manipulated by **Kiyoko**.

Confronting **Masaru, Takashi** and **Kiyoko**, the **Colonel** is joined by **Tetsuo**, who has learned of his "rivals" by reading the doctor's mind and come to torment them. He recognizes **Takashi** as the one who injured him out on the highway and attacks the three children, forcing them to fight for their lives.

Tetsuo demands to be told Akira's location, and the doctor urges the **Colonel** to reveal it, suggesting that **Tetsuo** might be just what they need—a paranormal powerful enough to control **Akira**. When the **Colonel** refuses, **Tetsuo** turns on him, knocking him out. Guided by **Kiyoko**, **Kaneda** and **Kay** reach the nursery and attack. To escape the laser, **Tetsuo** jumps out the window of the skyscraper, landing unhurt in the street below. **Kay** asks **Kiyoko** to reveal the secret of **Akira**, and **Kiyoko** does, telling her that **Akira** is **Number 28**.

Nezu

Kiyoko

Bartender

Clown

LET'S GO!!
VVVVNNN
OHEE!
!
FWOOM

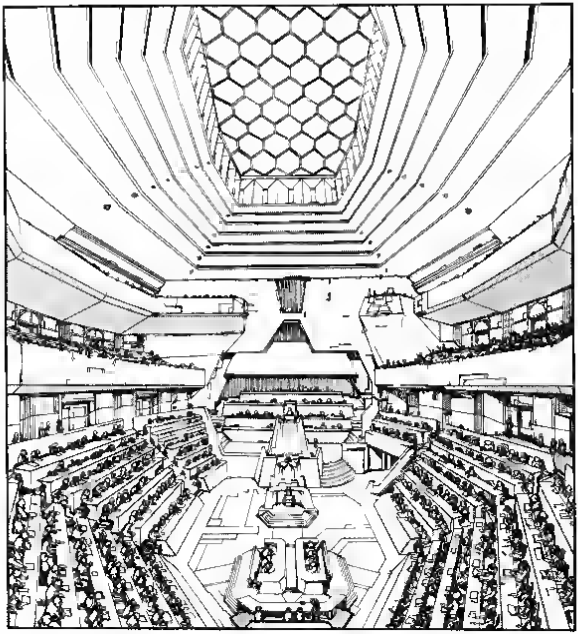
HE GOT THE LIEUTENANT!
COME ON AND TRY IT, ASSHOLES!
WWWNNN
AAAIEE!!

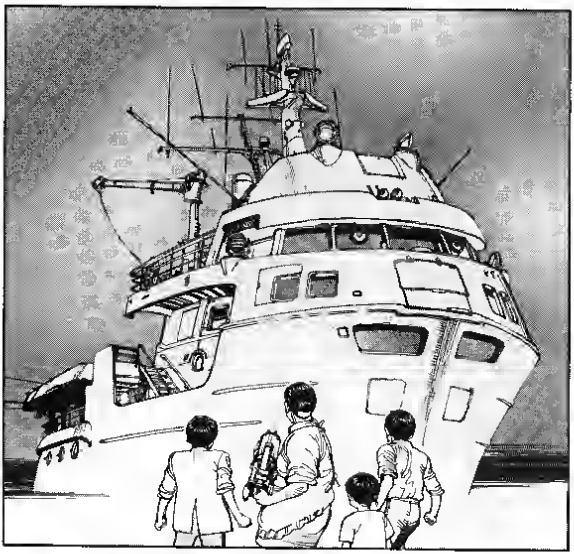
OF COURSE I READ THE RESULTS OF HIS APTITUDE TESTS, BUT I WON'T SEE WHAT...
THEN YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT HE'S BEYOND OUR CONTROL!
EH...?
WHAT WOULD YOU SUGGEST?
.....
WHAT'S WRONG THERE?
THERE... THERE'S BEEN AN INCREASE IN TEMPERATURE IN THE CENTRAL CHAMBER.
WHAT...?!
IT'S UP TO 0.00051° KELVIN IN THERE READINGS FOR THE DEWAR WALL ARE STILL NORMAL.
WHAT ABOUT THE SECOND CHAMBER? AND THE THIRD...?
SO FAR THERE'S BEEN NO CHANGE... SO FAR...

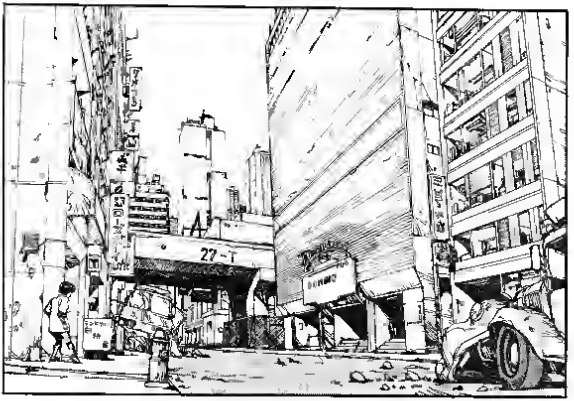
NEXT ISSUE: **THE AWAKENING**

OTOMO GALLERY

Reading *Akira*, it's natural to be swept along by its characters and story. Focused on these elements, it's also easy to overlook artist-creator Katsuhiro Otomo's many other virtues. For this gallery section, we've taken panels from up and coming issues that provide impressive examples of his approach to architecture and technical design. These elements are essential in conjuring the saga's convincing mood.



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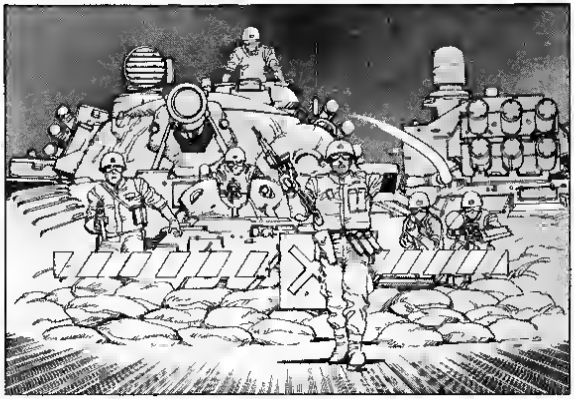
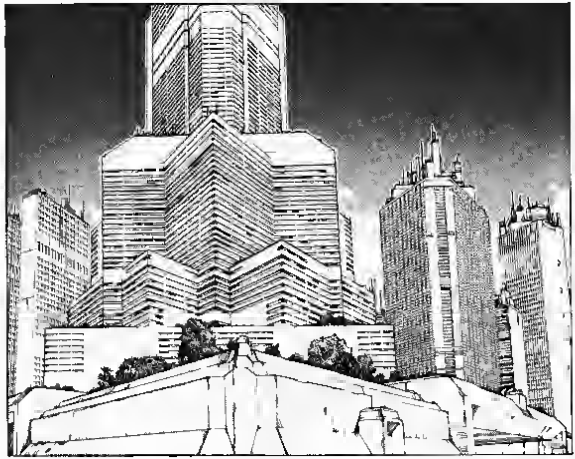


From the tanks and weaponry of a road block to the geometric array of city towers, Otomo uses this background material to make his science-fiction vision complete



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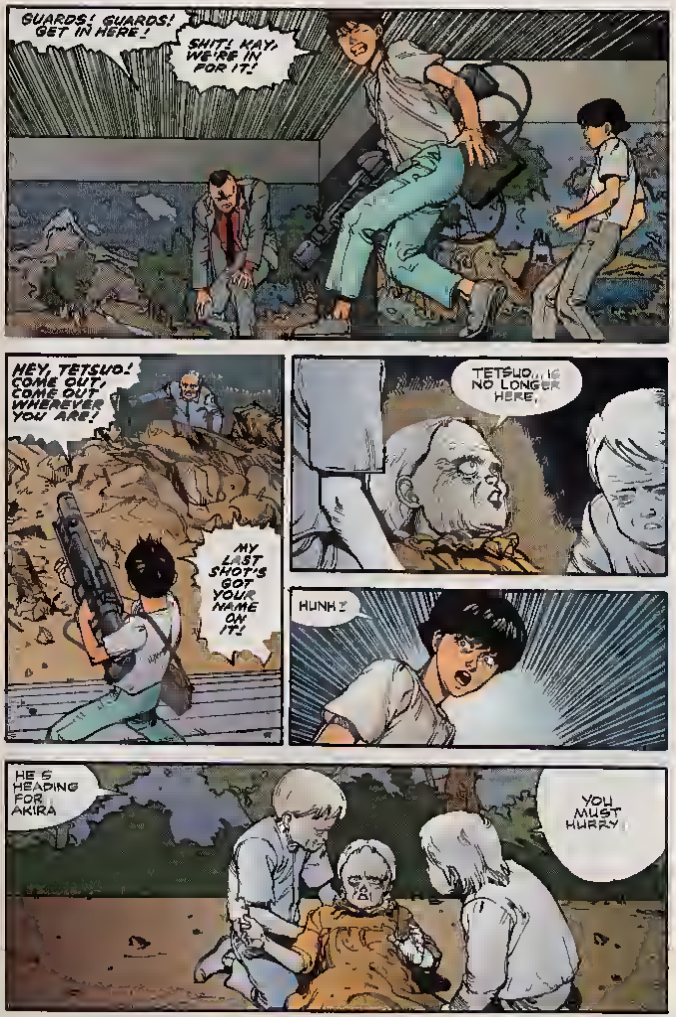
Escape. Somewhere on the streets of Neo-Tokyo in the year 2030 the young psychic-powered killer Tetsuo roams free of the secret government project where he learned of one possessing even stronger paranormal abilities than his own — AKIRA. Tetsuo now knows where this mysterious being lies in cryogenic sleep and means to find him. Meanwhile the anti-government agent, Kay and Tetsuo's former friend Kaneda are fighting their way out of the same project, hoping to overtake Tetsuo. They have the behind-the-scenes aid of three of the project's mutant children and an unexpected ally among their pursuers. But their escape, like Tetsuo's, can only send them stalking into an even greater, more ominous confrontation.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S


GUARDS! GUARDS! GET IN HERE!
SHIT! KAY, WE'RE IN FOR IT!
HEY, TETSUO! COME OUT, COME OUT WHEREVER YOU ARE!
MY LAST SHOT'S GOT YOUR NAME ON IT!
TETSUO... IS NO LONGER HERE.
HUNH?
HE'S HEADING FOR AKIRA
YOU MUST HURRY!

"WE" MUST HURRY?

YOU TOLD HIM, DIDN'T YOU, DOCTOR? YOU TOLD TETSUO WHERE TO FIND AKIRA!

TO STOP HIM... STOP TETSUO.

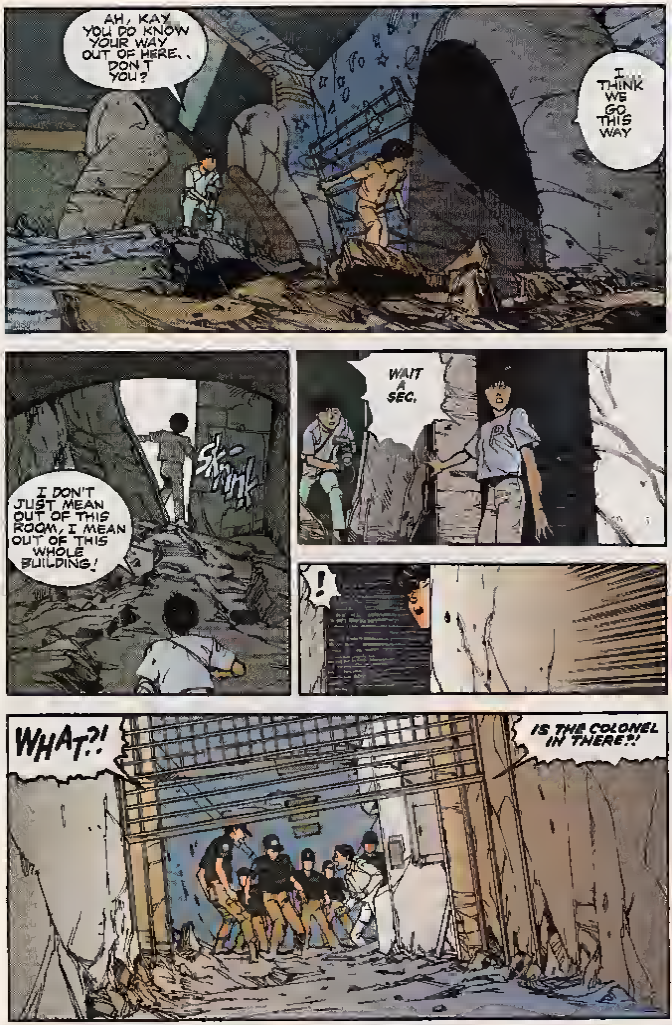
I'M SORRY, COLONEL! I HAD NO CHOICE! NUMBER 41-- TETSUO-- WENT OUT OF CONTROL WHILE YOU WERE UNCONSCIOUS. I HAD TO TELL HIM!

BUT I JUST TOLD HIM WHERE AKIRA IS. I DIDN'T THINK...
HE HAD THE POWER TO REACH HIM.

HEY!
ARE YOU GUYS TELLING ME TETSUO ISN'T UNDER THIS RUBBLE?

JUST WHERE AKIRA IS?
IS THAT ALL?

KANEDA!
LET'S GO!
I FORBID IT!
PUT A LID ON IT, YOU BIG APE!
Gomp
SHUT UP!
I DIDN'T EXPECT IT... I JUST DIDN'T EXPECT IT


AH, KAY. YOU DO KNOW YOUR WAY OUT OF HERE... DON'T YOU?
I THINK WE GO THIS WAY
I DON'T JUST MEAN OUT OF THIS ROOM, I MEAN OUT OF THIS WHOLE BUILDING!
Skrink
WAIT A SEC.
!
WHAT?!
IS THE COLONEL IN THERE?!